



## Clasax Victoria Podcast

### **Episode 6 - Angelique Planchat Henri SELMER Paris Show notes**

Henri SELMER Paris Website - <https://www.selmer.fr/en>

Angelique Planchat LinkedIn Profile - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ang%C3%A9lique-planchat>

Selmer Paris production workshop - <https://www.selmer.fr/en/pages/les-ateliers-de-productions>

John Lewis, Principal Bass Clarinet of Opera Australia Orchestra in Sydney -

<https://opera.org.au/artist/john-lewis>

#### **Interview Transcript between Brendan Toohey and Angelique Planchat:**

BT: Hello and welcome you're listening to the sixth episode of the Clasax Victoria podcast.

I'm your host, Brendan Toohey and today I'm very happy to be joined by Angelique Planchat (shay).

Am I pronouncing that correctly?

AP: Yeah.

BT: How do you pronounce your last name?

AP: Angelique Planchat (sha)

BT: Planchat (sha)?

AP: Yeah.

BT: My apologies!

AP: No worries.

So, Angelique is the Australian representative for Selmer Paris instruments in Australia. Welcome to the podcast, thank you for doing this.

AP: Thank you for the invitation.

BT: No worries. Thank you for your patience, we've rescheduled a few times. Can you just describe for the people watching or listening where we are right now?

AP: Sure, so we are the International Chamber of Commerce. So you can find the French, the Italian, the German, the American Chamber of Commerce and yeah, that's where they all gather to do some events in the Victoria or sometimes in other regions. They are promoting their countries through those international chambers and they are doing some links between those two countries so their country and Australia.

BT: Amazing, so you work out of this building usually? Like day-to-day?

AP: Yeah, most of the time I'm here and I'm at the French-Australian Chamber of Commerce. Yeah, we are in the CBD and...

BT: Incredible, yeah fantastic. So, I have many, many questions for you but before we get into the questions I should just explain to the audience. Firstly, apologies because I remember at the end of the last episode, I said we would speak to a saxophone player. That episode is coming, it's already in the works, it'll be the next episode but today I figured we better take this opportunity to talk about Selmer instruments. Because I love Selmer instruments, but often, I don't know, in Australia there's not a lot of clarinet players that play Selmer, but there's lots of saxophone players that play Selmer. Have you experienced this a little bit? Do you want to talk about that at all or?

AP: Yeah, definitely so lots of players know Selmer for saxophones. And I think that's the same thing everywhere all around the globe, but we also have some players that used to play the 10S (Series 10) or the 9S (Series 9), which are now what we could call vintage clarinets.

And we've got some players that actually play the Selmer clarinet, like John Lewis from the opera orchestra in Sydney. So there are a couple or especially the ones that play the bass clarinet, they're going to mostly play the Selmer bass, privilege. But, it's true that that's something that we need to improve.

BT: My very first bass clarinet was a Selmer, it was a model 37, or something, and it was beautiful, I loved it, it had such a warm rich sound, I think it was from like the 50s or something or the 60s, so yeah, it was getting a little bit old, but yeah, I loved that instrument. So, I've prepared a few questions for you, forgive me for referring to my notes, but you originally started working for Selmer in France? Is that right?

AP: No, I actually, it's a completely new position.

BT: Oh, tell us your story!

AP: Okay, so yeah, I'm Angelique Planchat. I've been working for Selmer since a year now, almost a year yeah, and I'm the area manager for Australia and New Zealand. It's a completely new position, so I just did the training in France and in the UK and then I moved to Australia, I come from musical family, everyone in my family plays an instrument. We all studied it at the local conservatorium, and chose to learn flute, from 6 to 18 and I was playing in the clarinet ensemble so I'm pretty familiar to that instrument as well. And, a curiosity for woodwinds kind of led me to pursue a career in the music industry, and that's why I'm here now working for Selmer.

BT: Excellent. Well, we've already had a few events with Clasax and we've got another one on tomorrow night so I doubt this podcast will be out by then but I'm sure we'll do more events in the future next year. So yeah, do you want to just talk a little bit about the Clasax play-testing event that we had and the one that we'll do tomorrow?

AP: Sure, so yeah, the main goal is to allow people to try the new instruments. Lots of musicians know our saxophones like the Mark VI, the Mark VII that we made a couple of years ago and now the main goal of these events is to show them how the new saxophones and new clarinets sound. How is the tuning, how is the ergonomics, how easy it is to play those instruments. We also have developed a couple of mouthpieces. So, the main yeah, my main job is to let everyone try all the new gear. There will be also lots of reeds to give away and so that people can find what's a reed strength is the best for them, which type of reeds (because we've got two types) fit them better.

BT: Yeah, fantastic. I didn't know this originally, but I think Selmer as a company started making reeds, didn't they?

AP: Yeah, exactly. So, it all started in 1885. With Henri Selmer himself. So, it all started with reeds and mouthpieces then moved to clarinets and saxophones.

I believe that yeah, everyone knows that the John Coltrane was playing the Mark VI. Louis Armstrong was playing the trumpet. So, you know, we've got some amazing musicians that played Selmer and that are still playing Selmer. So, it has quite a rich history. And actually, how we are linked to Adolphe Sax is that because of the model 22, that was really led by Adolphe Sax and he thought that it was the right direction to pursue, kind of. So, that's how they got along, (Adolphe Sax) and Henri Selmer built the saxophone workshop. And we are still making all of these instruments in the same manufactorie (factory) as before. So, it's a manufactorie (factory) that is an hour from Paris. It's like 20,000 meters squared with 400 or 500 employees. And everyone there has a role and application for how all the saxophones and clarinets are made. It's pretty amazing to see. So, if you go to France, you should definitely see it.

BT: It's definitely on my list. I definitely want to get over there and see it. It sounds amazing.

AP: It's so impressive. Really, you can see all the steps to manufacture anything, any products there, even like mouthpieces, you can see the whole process.

BT: Yeah, awesome. So, can anyone visit the factory and do like a tour, sort of thing?

AP: Yeah, you just need to tell us in advance and then we can book the tour so that you have also the explanations.

and there are just these called the **unknown?** and those moments are also for everyone to visit the state of those manufactories.

BT: Yeah, cool. You mentioned that the company Selmer started in 1885?

AP: Yep.

BT: So that makes this Selmer's 140th anniversary!

AP: Exactly! So, it's a huge year for Selmer and that's why we have launched some limited editions. So, we've got one for the alto and tenor saxophones. So, it's a black matte saxophone and we've got also a Muse (clarinet) that is in black matte as well and it actually takes the Alexandre Selmer engravings from a music sheet. We also have launched the gypsy guitar and a Satchmo (Louis Armstrong) trumpet, a jazz trumpet. So, that's very limited editions and we have also launched different accessories. So, for example a number of mouthpieces, for the concept and the jazz tribute which is also one of the new launches this year and new innovations. So that's, actually, I've got one here.

BT: Let's have a look, yeah hold it up to the camera so we can see.

AP: So, it's a gold-plated mouthpiece for the tenors there's just a blue patch to protect it but yeah, it has a pretty dark sound, very nice projection. So, you should definitely have a go and try it and during the Clasax event it will be possible.

BT: I'll definitely give it a play test. Alright, that's for Alto, did you say?

AP: No, for tenors.

BT: Okay.

AP: And we've got three openings with seven star, eight, and eight star. Yeah, we have also a completed family of the concept (mouthpieces). So, we've got now one for the baritone (saxophone). And we also have a density mouthpiece for clarinets, it's a very dense, rich sound. And it's the most open mouthpiece that we have for our clarinet.

BT: Cool, I actually play the Selmer concept (mouthpiece) on alto sax and it's great, I love it. I might have to try the new baritone one I think, because that sounds exciting.

AP: Yeah, bring your baritone tomorrow and you'll be able to try it. And we can also talk maybe about the ligatures, because there are some new ligatures.

That will be live on the 5th of December and there is one for baritone. So, like this, you can try the full set up.

BT: Oh, cool. You've got some other goodies here. Do you want to talk about what you've got and show us?

AP: Yeah! Why not? So, that's for the baritone.

BT: Cool.

AP: So, we can even do an unboxing it right now.

BT: Might have to hold it up so that everyone can see.

AP: Yeah. So, that's for a baritone and bass clarinet.

BT: Oh, awesome.

AP: And that is a ligature that we've made with Bambu. It's a braided ligature.

BT: Oh, yes.

AP: And you will know more about it in only a few weeks. So, that's kind of that ligature.

BT: So, it's sort of like a string-like ligature?

AP: Exactly.

BT: A woven fiber material. Cool, oh, I'm excited to try that out for sure, especially on bass clarinet as well. That's cool.

AP: Yeah. So, there are that ligature for the E (flat) clarinets.

BT: Oh, okay. All sizes.

AP: All sizes.

BT: Fantastic, excellent. Let me just refer to my notes.

So, for those that aren't as familiar with Selmer instruments, what does the current lineup look like? Can you explain maybe for my student models upwards of the clarinet and maybe alto sax or something?

AP: Sure, so we've got, we do the manufacturer the whole family, both saxophone and clarinets. For our clarinets, all our clarinets are made from grenadilla wood and that is coming from the Mozambique (rainforest) and they are all dried naturally for at least three years. that includes our student model, that is why it is so umm ...

BT: It's kind of difficult to source all of that grenadilla, it takes a long time.

AP: Yeah, but it's certified durably.

BT: Yep.

AP: Because Selmer is very engaged through ecology and CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility).

BT: Trying to be sustainable, yeah.

AP: Exactly. All of our clarinets are made from that wood and we've got our student models which is the Prologue. It has some cool features especially for the little fingers. There is an ergonomic register key. There is a plastic hole for the last finger here. There is also an adjustable thumb-rest horizontally and vertically and it's also customizable and then we've got the Presence. From the Presence all of the instruments have the evolution system, which is a resin that is put into the upper joint of the clarinet to prevent the cracks. So, we went from 10% to less than 1% of cracks. And especially in Australia where you have such differences in terms of weather from Tasmania to Cairns to Darwin.

BT: Absolutely, yeah.

AP: I think it's important that our clarinet doesn't crack, so that's a system avoids it. Yeah, the Presence is our first professional model. It has a really good response, easy to play and we've got four high end models that are approximately at the same price range and that are the Muse, the Privilege, the Signature and the Recital. The Privilege has been re-modernised for better ergonomics, better tuning and the Muse is our latest one and they all offer a different sound, different ergonomics so that it's really (catering for) all musicians. And on our saxophone side, we've got the student models that is the Axos, it's inspired by the models that had the most influence and that were, that had the best feedback. So, the Axos alto comes from, well, it's inspired by the Alto (Super Action 80 Series) II and the tenor by the Alto (Super Action 80 Series) III. And we've got also, we're still making the Alto (Super Action 80 Series) II and we've got then the Signature, which has some cool features from the Supreme and the Alto (Super Action 80 Series) II. For example, the octave system is from the Supreme, the ring that is a removable is from the Supreme. And then it has a really refined, centred sound and then we've got the Supreme, which is kind of the pinnacle of Selmer's craftsmanship. So, it's like 10 years of research, innovation, it's a huge work. Lots of players find it mind-blowing because it's totally different. It has a nice projection and it's so easy to play in the altissimo and the lower pitches. So yeah, have a go.

BT: Amazing, yeah, I think the key takeaway is there's lots of models and the best thing to do is just to try them out, you have to come along and play test them and see what fits for you. The Supreme, is that just Alto and Tenor?

AP: Yes, for now.

BT: For now? Are there other ones coming?

AP: I can't say.

BT: Can't say!

AP: But we are definitely trying to enrich all our ranges of the instruments but also on the accessories. We are trying to enrich jazz accessories, revamping all our accessories. Yeah, the Supreme has been really appreciated, so we're definitely trying to enrich the range.

BT: Excellent. Yeah, as you're answering, I'm thinking of many more questions to ask you. So yeah, you mentioned the jazz as well. So, you obviously Selmer make reeds, but they also make classical reeds and jazz reeds as well. Yeah, do you want to talk a little bit about that?

AP: Sure. So, we've got two types of reeds and the brown and the black box.

BT: Want to hold them up? The brown and the black box, which one's which?

AP: (Holds up brown box) That's our universal reeds, it's a French cut. (Holds up black box) and that's the jazz reads, so American cuts. They are both premium. They're both each from white canes and made in the south of France. They are organic, of course.

BT: So, they're sourced from the same cane, it's just the cut that's different?

AP: Yeah, exactly. Yeah, the process is exactly the same just the cut is different. But it comes from the same area, it's made by the same worker. It's just different in terms of how you cut them.

BT: It's hard to describe it, isn't it? You really have to just play them folks. Get along to these play-testing events and try them all out.

AP: Yeah, the sound is different. Also, it's a bit brighter, for example, if you use jazz reeds. And so you've got, when you open the box, you get this (holds up sealed reed in packet). And then when you open this, you get this (holds up reed in protective holder). You've got a white packaging where you can store your reed. And that will keep it from, yeah, too much humidity.

BT: Yeah, and I imagine that's all recyclable.

AP: Yeah, so it's even combustible actually.

BT: Oh, right!

AP: Yeah, and we do quarter strengths between 2.5 and 3.5s, so that you have more reeds that fit your needs and you don't have to throw (away) half of a box. Yeah, so you will find 2.75 and 3.25.

BT: Excellent, that's really good to go in quarter strengths, so it's not just half strength. Yeah, especially for Australian climate cause it's so unpredictable.

AP: Yeah, definitely. Like this, you can go gradually. Yeah, it's going to be easier to go to a harder strength, harder reed.

BT: Fantastic. I remembered we did actually have a question come in from one of our Clasax of members. So, I think it's the student model clarinet, what's the student model?

AP: The Prologue.

BT: Prologue! So, that's the one that comes with like different coloured rings on the bell?

AP: Exactly, so it's customizable. You've got six or seven rings, so there's black, red, pink, blue, gold, silver rings that you put on the bell, and you can just choose which ring you're going to put according to your, I don't know, emotion of the day, your ensemble, if everyone wants to have a blue one, yeah.

BT: I think students would love that, you know, you get to customize your instrument a little bit with your favourite colour. It's an easy way to tell them apart if you needed to pick up the blue one instead of the red one.

AP: Also, exactly yeah at least you can recognize your clarinet super easily and we're not going to take the one from your neighbour and it's also kind of a way to absorb some shocks as well because we know that students can be a bit clumsy.

BT: Yeah.

AP: Actually, everyone can be a bit clumsy especially with their instruments, yeah.

BT: So, those coloured rings, do they only fit that model of clarinet or do they work on other clarinets?

AP: No, only that one.

BT: Oh, ok. Interesting, that's cool. I didn't think of the, sort of, drop protection side of it. That's a good idea actually. Yeah, fantastic. Could you talk a little bit about your sort of story leading up to moving to Australia?

AP: Yeah. So, kind of always dreamt of coming to Australia and it was going to be either for work or for holidays.

BT: Right.

AP: And I saw the job offer at Selmer. I already knew the brand quite well because my sister plays a Selmer clarinet. And yeah, I applied, did the training in the UK and France. Then moved to here and, I mean, it's an amazing job. It's a real opportunity for me to make the fact that I, play music, and I work in business, and my main role is to support our (brand) ambassadors, we've got quite a lot here and help them on their different projects. It's also to work closely with our retailers. It's also about doing events like the Clasax tomorrow, like the one we did at Ozwinds three days ago with Stuart from D'Addario, with Phil Noy and Carlo Barbaro. So, it's about all of these making things happen and hence it's a little bit of a visibility there.

BT: Yeah, fantastic. So, you've been traveling around quite a bit, visiting all the retail stores and things?

AP: Exactly, so I've been traveling for work in all of the main cities and I've also been traveling for fun and I've been able to discover both coasts, the outbacks, and you've got really stunning landscapes,

it's amazing to see all those differences. I also got to go to New Zealand, which are now in like the top list of the countries that I've been, and yeah, it's just amazing and people have been really friendly and welcoming, so that makes my journey really great, yeah.

BT: Fantastic. Our Clasax president JoAnn interviewed you for the print version of the magazine, and in that interview, you mentioned that you did like kite surfing or something? Do you want to talk about that at all?

AP: I learned kite surfing in Egypt and it was an amazing experience. I just loved it, but that magazine was out in July and it's been the Winter and in Egypt it was really hot weather. So, I'm just going to wait a bit to do that again. Yeah.

BT: Is there anywhere in Australia that you haven't visited yet that you really want to? Anything on your list?

AP: Yeah, the road trip from **unknown** and Broome as well I really want to do it.

BT: Excellent, have you been to see Uluru? Ayers Rock?

AP: Yeah, I've been to Uluru.

BT: Aw, not even I've done that!

AP: Really? You should go! It's amazing, really. That red umm.

BT: The type of soil or rock in that area is amazing.

AP: Exactly. The red rock. Exactly yeah, Ayers Rock. Everything, how the trees are, everything was incredible and so different from what you're used to seeing. It seems so, so big.

BT: Well, I'm going to have to do that and then I'm going to have to go to France. I'm going to go to the Selmer factory. We'll talk, we'll organize it.

AP: Yeah, go to the Selmer factory to the workshop as well, it's where the headquarters are and there you can try everything.

BT: I imagine you can try just countless models and like, some of the same models. So yeah, that's the best place to go I imagine.

AP: Yeah, so you can try all the new models there are also some vintage ones because we, like for example, I think it was a thing this weekend, there was the rewind days and the rewind program is about giving a second life to the instruments. So, they are checked by **Marc something?** which are our technicians in Paris.

And then they're sold to the musicians and let you give me a second life.

BT: Yeah, great. Angelique, thank you so much for your time this afternoon. Is there anything else that you want to mention or shout out any upcoming events or anything like that?

AP: So, we're going to be there at some of the saxophone academies, clarinet mega day, or all of these events. If you also have some that you would want Selmer to be here, I would be very happy to join and support. I also wanted to say a big thank you to all of the Australian music community.

They have been really welcoming and yeah, I just wanted to say a big thank you to all the musicians, teachers, students and retailers for their warm support.

BT: It's our pleasure to have you here doing the hard work that you do, so thank you and Clasax and very happy that we can collaborate and put on these play-testing events, I'm sure we'll do more next year as well. Thank you again so much. Folks, get along to some of these fantastic events.

Make sure that you playtest everything that Selmer has to offer - reeds, mouthpieces, ligatures, instruments. It's a whole new world, so make sure you get along and try them.

Angelique, thanks again so much. I'm sure we'll see you soon.

AP: Yeah, well see you tomorrow!

BT: Yes, I'll see you tomorrow. Thank you.

**END TRANSCRIPT**